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THE VISITING NURSE DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF

HARRIET FULMER

VISITING NURSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PHIPPS DISPENSARY, BALTIMORE

By M. F.

DURING the third year of the work of the Phipps Dispensary in Baltimore a notable change has been made in the duties of the visiting nurse. Early in the year two extra nurses entered the field of tuberculosis nursing maintained by funds from the State Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. These four nurses are under the supervision of the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association and have undertaken the general visiting of tuberculous patients throughout the city, which is, for this purpose, divided into four parts. This plan allowed one of the regular nurses to withdraw from the general cases and devote her time to special investigation and special nursing for the Phipps Dispensary cases. According to the new method established, a list of the new cases that come to the dispensary and are diagnosed as definite pulmonary tuberculosis is sent to the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association and the names of the patients are distributed among the four nurses according to the district in which they reside. These patients are visited by the nurses and cared for in the routine way. Twice a month there is a meeting of the nurses and the Phipps Dispensary staff, at which the cases are discussed from the doctors' and nurses' standpoint and condition compared. The nurses see that the doubtful cases return for examination, that early cases come for treatment, and that other members of the family who show suspicious symptoms go to the dispensary for examination. They are also expected to report on the conditions of the old patients. From the physicians they learn the condition of the patient, the possibility of improvement or cure, and the important points in their treatment. Through this routine, the special tuberculosis nurse gains a general knowledge of the condition of all the patients, and by its arrangement she is able to devote herself to more exclusive cases. These special cases are patients that the physicians select for more particular observation and treatment. Most of them receive tuberculin or Mar-

morek's serum either for diagnosis or for treatment. When a patient is selected as possibly a suitable subject for treatment he is referred to the nurse who supplies him with a thermometer and a record book, teaches him how to take his temperature and pulse, and how to keep a daily record of his symptoms and diet. She then visits the patient in his home, looks over his general surroundings, plans the arrangements for sleeping out of doors, and, when necessary, confers with the charity organization societies for various relief measures. When the patient returns to the dispensary the record books are brought with him for inspection by the physicians, and the patient's home conditions are known to them through the nurse's report. The nurse then visits such patients two or three times a week, or oftener, until they are thoroughly grounded in routine, when her more particular attention is given to new patients and the older ones are visited less frequently. It is often necessary also for the nurse to visit daily patients who are in bed, and she often must assist in the treatment and study of patients by observing symptoms in the home after they have received tuberculin injections at the dispensary.

The result of the year's work has proved most gratifying, the majority of the patients having responded very readily to the suggestions made them. A large number are sleeping out of doors, many having erected special porches for that purpose. Most of the patients have remained comparatively at rest during the treatment and have shown great aptness in observing their symptoms and accurately recording them in the books furnished.

Besides these visits to the patients' homes and controlling their records, the nurse has assisted in a limited extent with the work at the dispensary. The large number of patients to receive tuberculin injections has made this additional help necessary, for she can aid the doctors in giving the injections. This amount of dispensary work gives her an opportunity to become more intimately associated with the physicians' standpoint and with the character of the treatment. Under this new plan it is felt that the work of the nurse has been of more value to the dispensary and it has decidedly added to the interest and efficiency of her work. Her visiting list is smaller and she is able to devote more time to the individual cases, receiving much encouragement in her work by the remarkable improvement many of the patients make.

ITEMS

THERE are five visiting nurses employed by the Thalian Tuberculosis Dispensary at Toledo, Ohio.

EVERY visiting nurse ought to have a copy of Miss LaMotte's paper in the March number of the JOURNAL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., has two good openings for visiting nurses. Please apply to Miss Strong, superintendent of the association, 2001 I Street, N. W.

MISS McKECHINE, formerly with the Orange Hospital, Orange, New Jersey, is now supervisor of tuberculosis work at the Nurses' Settlement, Orange, New Jersey.

IN Miss Wald's paper in the March number of the JOURNAL on "The Duties of the Visiting Nurse to the Stranger within our Gates" (the immigrant), she certainly touched the well spring of our opportunities—endless opportunities—for preventive work. Her suggestions should be read and re-read.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO VISITING NURSES

NURSES are eligible to these awards of the International Congress on Tuberculosis, and every Visiting Nurse must strive for No. 3.

The committee has decided to award testimonials to especially meritorious exhibits. These testimonials will take the form of medals, diplomas, or money prizes.

No. 1. A cash prize of one thousand dollars is offered for the best evidence of effective work in the prevention or relief of tuberculosis done by any voluntary association since the last International Congress in 1905.

No. 2. A cash prize of one thousand dollars is offered for the best exhibit of a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis among the working classes. This must be a detailed exhibit, covering construction, equipment and management.

No. 3. *A cash prize of one thousand dollars is offered for the best exhibit of a furnished room for the poor in the interest of the crusade against tuberculosis.*

No. 4. Several prizes of smaller value will be offered for educational leaflets. These prizes are designed to produce new educational literature.

No. 5. A medal is offered for the best exhibit illustrating effective organization of the anti-tuberculosis campaign in any state of the United States.

No. 6. A medal is offered for the best exhibit sent by any State or country (United States excluded), illustrating effective organization for the restriction of tuberculosis.

More detailed advice concerning the awards will be published later, or will be furnished on application to the Secretary General.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A VISITING NURSE CONFERENCE

ALL nurses engaged in any form of visiting nurse work are called to meet in Chicago, April 25th. An invitation is extended by the Chicago Association to every visiting nurse in the country to attend this conference, which will be held at the Auditorium Hotel. There will be two or three sessions. At the opening one, on Saturday at ten-thirty A.M., Miss Jane Adams of Hull House will speak on the Visiting Nurse in her relation to the Public Schools. Judge Julian Mack will talk on her relation to the Juvenile Court. Miss Dock and Miss Damer will also make addresses. The Directors of the Chicago Association will entertain at luncheon, and the afternoon and evening sessions held at two-thirty and at eight will be given up to informal discussions on the various problems of the work of the nurses. It is not the intention to make the meeting irksome. Every visiting nurse is asked to come or to send some message or suggestion that will be an inspiration. Representatives from boards of directors will also speak from their point of view. The matter of a national seal will come up at this time. Suggested topics are:

- (a) Visiting Nurses in Out-patient Department Work of Hospitals.
- (b) Best Method of Forming a New Society in Any Locality.
- (c) How to Extend the Work into Country Districts.
- (d) Is the Uniform Necessary?
- (e) The Visiting Nurse's Salary.

The above is an urgent invitation to the meeting in Chicago, and is set at this time in order to secure the attendance of nurses who are gathering here on their way to San Francisco, taking the official train from Chicago, Sunday, April 26th.